



Andrew McDonald
Chief Executive

7th Floor
Portland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5BH

Mr Karl McCartney JP MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

T 020 7811 6400
E andrew.mcdonald@parliamentarystandards.org.uk
www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

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CORRESPONDENCE WITH IPSA

I write following your question in the House earlier today, in which you suggested that I have used “bullying tactics and threats to try and silence” you. I reject this.

Some of the notes written by you, and attached to your claims, were recently brought to my attention. Having reviewed those notes, I was taken aback by the content, which ranged from the abusive (“you are a pedantic SOAB, aren’t you?”) through to the offensive (“you’re talking [REDACTED]”) and on to the condescending (“simples – or didn’t you do Geography at Eton and Oxford...”). We will do all that is reasonable to shield our team from such treatment. This policy and its application in your case have been expressly endorsed by the Board.

I had hoped it would be possible to address this behaviour without writing to you formally. In the light of your comments today, I write to ask that you conduct your dealings with us – orally or in writing – in civil terms.

I do not ask you to like IPSA or its policies. At the same time, IPSA’s team deserves to be treated in a courteous manner. I ask that, with immediate effect, you desist from correspondence which falls below this standard.

Turning, to your remarks about IPSA's costs, you may wish to note that we have committed to deliver savings of 5% each year across the Comprehensive Spending Review, in common with other public bodies. We continue to meet and exceed these savings targets and expect to do so in the current financial year as well as in our Estimate for 2013/14. Our administration costs in 2012/13, furthermore, represent just 3.4% of the public money which we administer.

We are, in effect, responsible for all costs incurred by 650 small operations working in different locations, doing jobs differently, each with their own team of staff – totalling more than 3,000. We oversee expenditure of £176 million and do so cost effectively and in public. Additionally, we have a regulatory role in respect of MPs' business costs and expenses and their pay and pensions. Any discussion of our costs should, I suggest, be informed by a full understanding of our role and responsibilities.

Given your recent public reference to communication between yourself and IPSA, I am publishing this letter.

Andrew McDonald
Chief Executive